UNIT 1 – RELATIONSHIPS AND PERSONALITY

Aunt Pegg

Our parents were **over-indulgent** towards us, and we were happy but not particularly **well-behaved** children. Maybe they felt **guilty** because, on one occasion, they had to leave home for two weeks on business and invited our Aunt Pegg to look after us. She accepted the challenge **eagerly**.

Vile Aunt Pegg! **Leering, sneering, peering** Aunt Pegg! We would be enjoying a friendly fight or just sitting doing nothing when she would **pounce** on us like a cat, and **savage retribution** would follow. As we stood in the corner of the room with hands on heads, she would **snarl**, 'How **dare** you! Making my tidy room messy, wasting your time. I saw you!'

Aunt Pegg had **eyes on sticks**. How she saw us we never knew: one moment she wasn't there, the next she was on top of us. She was a **wizened**, tiny woman of great muscular strength and energy, and her mouth was like an upside-down new moon without the hint of a smile.

She constantly spoke of her 'philosophy of life' but we only experienced the superficial features of it. She kept us occupied at all times, sweeping the yard, tidying the house and learning to cook tasteless, crumbling cakes. On the first day she blew a whistle to order us downstairs to a breakfast of chewy, sugarless oat cereal. The sugary, salty foods we loved were locked away, and eating our morning bowlful was a lonely marathon. If we didn't eat it all up, we were given extra cleaning to do.

By day two we were very **mournful** children. Nostalgia set in as we remembered our happier past. We went about our daily tasks like little zombies. We became **uncommunicative** and even forgot (to our Aunt's extreme pleasure) to insult each other. Both of us longed for the day when our dear parents would return and unlock the barred doors of our prison.

On day three we were introduced to our educational programme. She set us impossible mental arithmetic sums at tremendous speed and always finished with 'And twenty-nine, add 'em all together and take away the number I first said'. Then there was 'Reading Improvement', which consisted of moral tales from the nineteenth century, and 'Practical Farmwork', which mostly involved the identification and eradication of weeds. We were not allowed to re-enter the house until we had successfully whispered the name of the plant into Aunt Pegg's good ear. If we did not use the official Latin name she would snap at us. 'You **wicked** child! It is certainly not Hairy Stinkweed. I'll not have swearing in my house!'

Of course we attempted to break free. It happened on a visit to town, while we were carrying the heavy bags with Aunt Pegg **marching** behind, tapping her walking stick like an officer in the army. At a mutual sign we dropped the bags and ran for it. Our Aunt seemed prepared for this. She blew her whistle and shouted 'Stop thief!' and we were painfully restrained by several burly members of the public.

When we reached home we were given a stern lecture on 'philosophy' and 'morals' and sent to bed with just a slice of bread, some cheese and a lettuce leaf. We hated lettuce. Apparently much of Aunt Pegg's philosophy was connected with diet.

She must have thought that we were **lazy, naughty** children who needed strong routine and discipline to prevent the rot from setting in. How we cried with joy when our smiling parents returned, bearing presents and hugging us tight.

1. Aunt Pegg isn't just mean; her personality is defined by her energy and her facial expressions. Put each definition in the correct space.

Large and strong; heavily built - Unwilling to talk or impart information

Extremely unpleasant; morally bad - Allowing someone to have everything they want

Shrivelled or wrinkled with age

Word from Text	Definition	Personality Trait
Over-indulgent		Too kind / Soft (The Parents)
Wizened		Ancient / Tough
Vile		Malicious / Wicked
Burly		Powerful (The Public)
Uncommunicative		Withdrawn / Silent (The Children)

2. The author uses three specific rhyming words to describe Aunt Pegg. Explore their meaning.

- **Leering:** Looking in an unpleasant, malicious way.
- **Sneering:** A facial expression of contempt or scorn (mocking).
- **Peering:** Looking closely or with difficulty (searching for faults).

3. Match the action to Aunt Pegg's physical reaction.

The Word	The Physical Action	The "Vibe" / Connotation
Peering	A wide, unpleasant, fixed stare or a "hungry" look.	**Suspicion:** She is searching for a mistake or a mess.
Sneering	Curling the top lip, looking down the nose.	**Contempt:** She thinks the children are worthless or "wicked."
Leering	Squinting, looking through a crack in the door, with concentration and difficulty.	**Predatory:** She is watching them like a cat waiting to pounce.

4. Complete the following sentences using one of the three words. Ensure the sentence explains *why* the character is making that face.

a. The school bully stood at the back of the cafeteria, _____ at my old, torn backpack until I felt ashamed.

b. The detective was _____ through the dusty magnifying glass, looking for a single fingerprint.

c. In the dark alleyway, the strange man was _____ from the shadows, making the passers-by quicken their pace.

5. Vocabulary associated with CONTROL. The text uses "Power Verbs" to show how Aunt Pegg relates to the children.

Pounce: To spring or swoop suddenly (shows she is predatory).

Savage retribution: Extremely violent or cruel punishment.

Eradication: The complete destruction of something (used for weeds, but implies her attitude toward "fun").

Restrained: Kept under control or deprived of freedom.

Fill in the gaps using the four vocabulary terms above. You may need to change the word slightly to fit the sentence (e.g., *restrain* to *restrained*).

a. The moment we reached for a forbidden biscuit, Aunt Pegg would _____ upon us from behind the kitchen door.

b. After we tried to run away in town, we were painfully _____ by several strong members of the public.

c. Aunt Pegg viewed "fun" as a disease that required total _____; she wanted every smile deleted from the house.

d. If we dared to whisper during our lessons, we knew that a _____ would follow, such as cleaning the entire yard in the rain.

e. The wild cat waited in the tall grass, ready to _____ the second the mouse moved.

f. The police officer _____ the thief to prevent him from escaping through the crowded market.

g. The gardener worked all afternoon on the _____ of the weeds that were choking the flowers.

h. Burning your favorite toy just for being five minutes late is an example of _____.

Why did the author use "Savage Retribution" instead of "a big punishment"? What does the word "Savage" tell us about Aunt Pegg's personality?

6. Imagery: Aunt Pegg’s personality is felt through the senses. Use this table to show how "Relationships" aren't just about what people say, but how they make the environment feel.Find examples from the text to complete the chart.

Sense	Text Evidence	Vocabulary Expansion
Sound		**Abrasive:** A harsh, grating personality.
Touch		**Onerous:** A task that is oppressively burdensome.
Sight		**Vigilant:** Keeping careful watch for danger/difficulties.

7. Write between 3 and 6 sentences describing a very different relative, using synonyms for the opposite of Aunt Pegg’s traits.

- Instead of **Wizened**, use **Radiant**.
- Instead of **Vile**, use **Benevolent**.
- Instead of **Uncommunicative**, use **Gregarious**.

Example: "Uncle Bob was a **radiant** man who was incredibly **over-indulgent** with his snacks. Unlike Aunt Pegg, he never **snarled**; instead, he was **gregarious** and told stories until we fell asleep."

8. Explain HOW the author’s use of the words *‘Leering, sneering, peering’* helps you imagine Aunt Pegg. This will help you understand how to organise your answer.

The "PEE" (Point, Evidence, Explanation) framework:

Point: The author uses rhyming present participles to create a sense of constant, intrusive observation.

Evidence: The words "Leering, sneering, peering" suggest she is always watching the children.

Explanation:

- **Leering** makes her seem like a predator hunting prey.
- **Sneering** shows her lack of respect and her "philosophy" of judgment.
- **Peering** emphasizes that the children have no privacy; she is always looking for "the rot."

The Rhyme: The repetitive "-ing" sound makes it feel like a chant or a spell, making her seem more like a fairy-tale villain than a real person.

9. Re-read the descriptions of:

(a) Aunt Pegg in paragraphs 2 and 3;

(b) the children in paragraph 5.

Select words and phrases from these descriptions, and explain how the writer has created effects by using this language.

PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3

EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT	EFFECT / IMPACT
Word / Phrase: _____	_____ _____ _____
Word / Phrase: _____	_____ _____ _____
Word / Phrase: _____	_____ _____ _____

PARAGRAPH 5

EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT	EFFECT / IMPACT
Word / Phrase: _____	_____ _____ _____
Word / Phrase: _____	_____ _____ _____
Word / Phrase: _____	_____ _____ _____

Writing Task

Imagine you are Aunt Pegg. After one week of looking after the children, you write a letter to their parents in which you:

- give your impressions of the children;
- give an account of your progress with them so far;
- tell your plans for the next week.

Write your letter. Base it on what you have read in Passage A. You should write between 250 and 350 words.

Voice: _____

Audience: _____

Register: _____

Purpose: _____

Useful Vocabulary

Synonyms for "Leering, Sneering, Peering" (Her Gaze)

- **Vigilant:** Keeping a careful watch for possible danger or difficulties (or mistakes!).
- **Baleful:** Having a harmful or destructive effect; a "deadly" look.
- **Scornful:** Feeling or expressing deep contempt or dislike.
- **Inquisitorial:** Like an intense or harsh questioner; searching for guilt.
- **Malevolent:** Having or showing a wish to do evil to others.

Synonyms for "Savage Retribution" (Her Punishments)

- **Draconian:** (Of laws or their application) excessively harsh or severe.
- **Vindictive:** Having or showing a strong or unreasoning desire for revenge.
- **Tyrannical:** Exercising power in a cruel or arbitrary way.
- **Chastisement:** Severe criticism or punishment.
- **Authoritarian:** Favoring or enforcing strict obedience to authority.

Synonyms for "Wizened" & "Powerful" (Her Physicality)

- **Sinewy:** Lean and muscular (perfect for "great muscular strength").
- **Gnarled:** Knobby, rough, and twisted, especially with age.
- **Austere:** Severe or strict in manner, attitude, or appearance.
- **Diminutive:** Extremely or unusually small (a great upgrade for "tiny").
- **Indomitable:** Impossible to subdue or defeat; full of terrifying energy.

Synonyms for "Over-indulgent" (The Parents' Contrast)

- **Permissive:** Allowing or characterized by great or excessive freedom of behavior.
- **Lax:** Not sufficiently strict, severe, or careful.
- **Lenient:** (Of a person or punishment) more merciful or tolerant than expected.

Optimism is an essential ingredient for success – but can you teach it?

We all judge our friends and family all the time, in different ways – by the music they like, the clothes they wear, whether they're **outgoing** or **reserved**, **serious** or **happy-go-lucky**. But did you know that some global companies classify their potential **high-flying**, young graduate recruits as **optimistic** or **pessimistic**, and that they favour those who have a more optimistic outlook?

Some business leaders have identified optimists as being more open to new ideas, more willing to try out new ways of working. 'Optimists are better at bouncing back after setbacks and more focused on working hard to achieve their goals,' one manager told us. 'If you want to make changes in your company or be more **efficient**, an optimist will look for ways to make it work, not give you reasons why it can't.'

One study discovered that salespeople who were characteristically optimistic sold over a third more than their pessimistic counterparts. What's more, optimists are less likely to need time off for illness, while pessimists are twice as likely to quit their jobs in the first year. Pessimism is expensive! Employers who spend money to train young people in today's **tough** economic climate are looking for ways to ensure their investment is transformed into profits. The optimism of potential recruits, not just their academic credentials, is seen by some companies as a short-cut to business success.

Of course, you might be thinking how unfair it is that after all the sacrifices made for a good education, your future might be limited by a personality trait that you can't change. Surely it's better to be **realistic** than optimistic? The cautiousness of pessimists is also needed for making decisions in the boardroom, perhaps, as well as in everyday life. One local company boss was more **sceptical**. 'Optimism needs to have its basis in confidence and ability, not **bravado**,' he said. 'We all like happy colleagues, but it's good qualifications, hard work and loyalty that I prize.'

But what if, as studies have shown, your natural pessimism holds you back at school? A local teacher, Mrs Suarez, talked about the damage pessimism can have on her students. '**Intelligent**, **hard-working** students can be knocked off course when they have a **bad** test result or when they struggle in one area of their studies. They highlight every little setback and that attitude can halt their progress.' She recognises that teachers have a part to play in encouraging students not to dwell on failures. 'But we can't change people's personalities in some futile attempt to improve results, and there's no spare time in a good academic curriculum in any case,' she warned. 'Some students just have to accept that they're not good enough and no amount of optimism is going to change that.'

In contrast with her views, another local college offers lessons in optimism in the first term of students' IGCSE work. 'Optimism is an untapped resource which can improve the performance of all students,' the course teacher, Mr Paul, told us. 'Students who were previously **crippled** by the fear of failure can learn to regard setbacks as temporary, to move on and reach their potential.' He teaches strategies to help students focus on their successes, to try out more effective ways of learning and be more open to advice. Optimism can be harnessed for success, according to Mr Paul, and he understands why those **big** companies prefer to recruit optimists. 'There are **tangible** benefits, in school and beyond, for young people who have had optimism training. Just ask the teachers in this college about the difference it's made in their lessons!'

1. This new text explores new vocabulary related with personality traits. Let’s take a look at those sophisticated alternatives. Put each word or phrase in the correct space.

BRAVADO – FUTILE – INDOMITABLE – TANGIBLE – HIGH-FLYING

Basic Word	**The Author’s "Upgrade"**	**Personality Context**
Successful		Someone who is very successful or ambitious in their career.
Brave/Show-off		A bold manner intended to impress or intimidate.
Real/Noticeable		Clear and definite; real benefits you can actually see.
Useless		Pointless; producing no result or effect.
Unstoppable		(Synonym for "bouncing back" / resilient).

2. The text focuses on two opposites: **Optimism** and **Pessimism**.

The "Reaction" Table: How do these two personalities react to the same event? Use words from the text to fill in the blanks.

The Event	**The Optimist's Reaction**	**The Pessimist's Reaction**
A Bad Test Result	Sees it as a **temporary** setback.	
A Change at Work		Is **sceptical** and gives reasons why it fails.
A Difficult Task		**Crippled** by the fear of failure.

3. Synonyms for Personality & Relationships: Let's find words to describe the characters in this text without using the words from the page.

The "Boss" (The Skeptic)

- Pragmatic: Dealing with things sensibly and realistically.
- Cautious: Avoiding potential problems or risks.
- Meritocratic: Believing that power should be given to people with the best abilities.

The "Pessimistic Student"

- Despondent: In low spirits from loss of hope or courage.
- Defeatist: Expecting or admitting failure too easily.
- Withdrawn: Not wanting to communicate with others.

The "Optimistic Recruit"

- Resilient: Able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions.
- Tenacious: Tending to keep a firm hold of something; clinging to a goal.
- Proactive: Creating or controlling a situation rather than just reacting to it.

How would these different archetypes respond to the same situation?

The Scenario: A high school project is due in two days, but the group leader just quit.

The "Boss": Write one sentence that is **pragmatic** and **cautious**.

- *Example: "We need to scale back the project to something realistic that we can actually finish by Friday."*

The "Pessimistic Student": Write one sentence that is **despondent** and **defeatist**.

- *Example: "There's no point in trying now; we're definitely going to fail anyway."*

The "Optimistic Recruit": Write one sentence that is **proactive** and **tenacious**.

- *Example: "I've already started a new draft and I'm going to stay up all night to ensure we hit our goal."*

New Scenario: The Community Garden Crisis

The Situation: A local community garden that the group has been working on for months was accidentally flooded overnight by a broken pipe. Half the plants are ruined, and a "Best Garden" inspection is happening tomorrow morning.

1. The "Boss" (The Skeptic)

Goal: Focus on the facts and the rules (Pragmatic, Cautious, Meritocratic).

The Sentence: _____

_____

_____

_____

2. The "Pessimistic Student" (The Quitter)

Goal: Focus on the hopelessness (Despondent, Defeatist, Withdrawn).

The Sentence: _____

_____

_____

_____

3. The "Optimistic Recruit" (The Hero)

Goal: Focus on the solution (Resilient, Tenacious, Proactive).

The Sentence: _____

_____

_____

_____

4. Fill in the Gaps using the following words.

High-flying | Sceptical | Dwell | Tangible | Futile | Bravado | Harness

1. Even though he acted tough, his confidence was just _____; inside, he was actually quite nervous.

2. It is _____ to try and dry your clothes in the rain; you're just wasting your time.

3. After the team lost the final, the coach told them not to _____ on their mistakes but to look forward to next season.

4. The CEO is a _____ executive who started her own company at the age of twenty-two.

5. Scientists are _____ about the new discovery until they can see more proof.

6. The new school library provided _____ evidence that the building project was finally finished.

7. If you can _____ your energy and focus, you will be able to finish your IGCSE revision in half the time.

5. The text uses strong verbs to show how personality affects movement through life.

- **To Halt:** To bring to a sudden stop. (*"Pessimism can **halt** their progress."*)
- **To Dwell:** To think or speak at length about an unhappy thing. (*"Don't **dwell** on failures."*)
- **To Harness:** To control and make use of. (*"Optimism can be **harnessed** for success."*)
- **To Recruit:** To enlist someone in an organization.

Write a short paragraph, like an advice column for a pessimistic student. Use the words Halt, Dwell, and Harness in your response.

*Example: "Dear Student, don't let one bad grade **halt** your journey. If you **dwell** on that F, you'll never learn. Instead, **harness** that frustration to study harder next time!"*

Evaluating Arguments

6. Match the person to their argument and identify their "trait."

"Optimists bounce back and focus on goals."

"I prize qualifications and loyalty over bravado."

"Some students just aren't good enough; time is limited."

"We teach strategies to focus on success."

Person	Their Argument	Trait
The Manager		Tenacious / Resilient
The Sceptical Boss		Meritocratic / Pragmatic
Mrs. Suarez		Defeatist / Cautious
Mr. Paul		Proactive

7. The text claims that "Pessimism is expensive." Evaluate if this is a pragmatic fact or a biased opinion.

Task: The "Why" Chain

1. According to the text, why do pessimists cost more money?
2. Is the manager being meritocratic by hiring optimists, or is he being unfair?

3. Evaluation Question: If a student is withdrawn but highly intelligent, does the manager's argument suggest they are a "bad investment"?

8. The sceptical boss says: "Optimism needs to have its basis in confidence and ability, not bravado." Rank the following traits from 1 to 5 (1 = Most important for a job, 5 = Least important) based on the Sceptical Boss's argument:

- [ ] Being **Tenacious** (clinging to goals)
- [ ] Having **Academic Credentials** (Meritocratic)
- [ ] Being **Pragmatic** (realistic)
- [ ] Being **Proactive** (starting new things)
- [ ] Being **Resilient** (bouncing back)

Writing Task – Argumentative Writing (Paper 2, Question 1)

Imagine that your school is considering the introduction of a course of lessons in optimism. Write a letter to the headteacher of your school in response to the ideas about optimism that are discussed in the magazine article.

In your letter you should:

• identify and evaluate the arguments given in the article

• give your views on whether or not you think optimism can or should be taught in your school.

Base your letter on the magazine article, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the bullet points. Begin your letter: 'Dear Headteacher…'

Write about 250 to 350 words.

Voice: _____

Audience: _____

Register: _____

Purpose: _____

ARGUMENTS FROM THE TEXT	MY OWN ARGUMENTS

The Price of Fame

Mia hated being ordinary and dreamed of being a pop star. She reached the live final of TV show, 'The Talent'. This is her diary entry for the day after the final.

I am **mortified**. Yesterday was the worst day of my life. The final was to be broadcast to millions across the whole country. Just three contestants were left: the so-called '**Glamorous** Granny' who sang those classic tunes that nobody cares about, the **irritatingly chirpy** boy band, and me. I hated the way they all laughed and **chatted** to the lowly technicians and I was sick of their smiling faces on every magazine cover. They were **no-hopers** compared to me; I would win because I was the most talented. All the newspapers admitted that I had the best voice and I was feeling confident. The other contestants were so annoying that I couldn't help getting **snappy** at them. I suppose I did criticise their song choices and I laughed at that girl's **emerald sequinned** dress – but it looked ridiculous on her. And the technicians were so boring that it's no wonder I ignored all their **pointless** instructions.

The two presenters of the show kept saying, 'Be nice on the way up; you never know who you'll meet on the way down.' But why listen to them? I couldn't help being late for rehearsals and the reporters who constantly hung around the contestants were irritating. Why would I bother talking to them? I don't know why they published that silly piece about me the night before the final. 'Diva Mia: the awful truth about a monster in the making.' What was that all about?

An hour before the final, I **preened** in front of the mirror as the stylist, Boone, sprinkled glitter over my shoulders. **Iridescent shimmers** caught the light as he **fluttered** about before declaring that my eyes were **sparkling** jewels. I admired my **luminous** form practising a few elegant dance moves, as Boone **muttered** something about my 'sheer ambition'. I would **dazzle** on stage tonight, a true star. Like a comet **blazing** a trail, nothing could stop me now.

As my turn on stage drew closer, I tried to ignore the murmurs of the backstage staff about my 'constant complaining' – and the way everyone seemed to be reading that silly front page article about me. I knew I could be the winner and if the other contestants were complaining about me, then it was out of **bitterness** and **envy** – just because I had shouted at the hairdresser for being late, and pushed that little boy out of my way because he insisted on an autograph. It was an accident and even his mother had to agree with me. I'm not perfect. I loved my life as a singer and I wanted fame so much, I could almost taste it. If someone has a talent then it's a crime to waste it. Anyway, these people were in the past and now was my time to **shine**. Ignoring the **scowls** on the faces of the backstage workers, I gave a brave smile to the presenters and waited for the signal to go on stage.

I stepped into a cauldron of noise. **Hissing and booing**, thousands of **jeering** voices filled the theatre. I struggled to catch my breath as my suddenly fragile voice was drowned by the audience's **derision**. I blinked away my **scalding** tears and tried again to sing the first notes. Even the band had stepped away from me, and I stood alone against the waves of anger from the audience. They hated me!

Throwing down my microphone, I **fled** the stage into the comforting gloom of the theatre wings. Fake smiles on their faces, the presenters insisted on a comment with their cameraman **looming menacingly**, ready to record every moment of my collapse. My tears would be **plastered** all over the newspapers tomorrow morning. I would be shamed in front of the whole country. I pushed everyone away and ran down the maze of corridors, searching for the exit.

Finally, I pushed hard against a door and found myself standing in a gloomy alley behind the theatre. I'd been a puppet for the media. Was this the price of fame?

1. Compare the **verbs** used to describe Mia's movement in Par. 3 with those in Par. 5.

How does the 'energy' of the scene change from one to the other?

To do so, you should identify words like *preened*, *fluttered*, *dazzle*, *struggled*, *drowned*, and *fled*.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Paragraph 3 is full of "shimmering" imagery, while Paragraph 5 and 6 shift toward "gloom."

In Paragraph 3, Mia describes herself using words like *luminous*, *iridescent*, and *blazing*.

What do these words suggest about how she views her own importance?

How does the 'comforting gloom' of the wings in the final section contrast with this?"

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Look at the phrase 'cauldron of noise' in Paragraph 5.

What are the literal properties of a cauldron (heat, bubbling, danger)?

Why is this a more 'powerful' choice than simply saying the audience was 'very loud'?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Words for Effect

Re-read the descriptions of:

a) Mia's appearance and attitude in paragraph 3, beginning 'An hour before the final …'

b) the audience reaction and its effect on Mia in paragraph 5, beginning 'I stepped into a cauldron of noise …'

Select four powerful words or phrases from each paragraph. Your choices should include imagery. Explain how each word or phrase is used effectively in the context.
Write about 200 to 300 words.

	Word/Phrase	The Imagery (What does it look/feel like?)	The Effect
Para 3	*Example:* *Example:* *Example:* *Example:*		
Para 5	*Example:* *Example:* *Example:* *Example:*		

Writing Task

You are a journalist writing an article about Mia, one year after she appeared on the TV show, 'The Talent'. You have interviewed Mia. Write your article.

In your article you should:

• describe Mia's behaviour and attitude at the time of the show

• explain how other people were affected by Mia's behaviour

• explore the part played by the media and the public in Mia's downfall and how it has changed Mia's behaviour one year on.

Base your magazine article on what you have read in the text, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the three bullet points.

Begin the magazine article: 'Let's catch up with the disgraced finalist, Mia, from 'The Talent' – the diva we all loved to hate last year …'

Write about 250 to 350 words.

BULLET POINT 1	BULLET POINT 2	BULLET POINT 3

Why I'm Leaving the Band

An unsuccessful performer talks about the difficulty of becoming a musician, forcing him to leave the band he's worked in for years.

I've been a performer for over fifteen years now and, like most musicians, I once dreamed of being top of the charts and playing to people all over the world.

When we started out, we had a good local following: people seemed to like us and we were getting pretty good at writing songs. We practised all the time and every spare moment was devoted to getting better. We even recorded a CD and could have sent it off to a few record companies. I guess we just didn't have the contacts. I do know that you need a record deal if you are going to get anywhere in the business. Promoting a band costs money, and we didn't have any rich investors.

We tried to promote the band a bit. We printed out some flyers and gave them to people at our gigs, although I don't really like all that marketing business. It's all about image these days, isn't it? Bands are just another product to be sold. I still think it's about the music though. If you haven't got great songs, then you won't get that deal.

I wanted to play some free concerts: the other people in the band said we needed to make money to cover expenses. Someone suggested we give out free tickets or even T-shirts with our logo on, but I think that would have taken time to organise and cost a fortune. I liked it when some of our friends came to concerts, however, I'm really shy so I never got round to talking to people who were there. Someone asked if they could start a fan club, which was weird – I don't know if they ever did. Probably not.

We did get one of our songs played on local radio; I thought that might be our big break, but they didn't play it again. I guess the DJ didn't like it much. I know other local bands were played a lot and their songs ended up being played nationally and on music channels on TV.

I think we suffered too because we didn't have a video for any of our songs. If we had made one somehow, then we could have put it on social media or maybe even made a website. I've heard that some bands were discovered because someone filmed their concert and put it on the internet. I didn't want to do it because somebody might have stolen our songs and pretended they were theirs. I did join some musicians' forums but the feedback was quite negative so I stopped posting. We got lots of criticism for not having an 'image' – I still think it should be about the songs. Who cares if we are scruffy and don't look like models? My mum said I looked great.

I sent an email out to lots of record companies with no response at all. I suppose they have hundreds of emails every day, but it would have been nice to get a reply. I wish we'd had the money to do something really creative. Do you know, one band hired a truck and played outside the record company office? I guess that helped them stand out from the crowd.

I know A&R (Artists and Repertoire) people have to be cautious these days because there are so many bands out there and they won't sign you unless they think you will make them money. I read an article saying that bands should show record companies how serious they are about the business – even saying you should get an accountant.

Anyway, it's probably for the best. Record companies sometimes exploit bands and they end up working really hard and never making a decent living. I think the contracts can be really complicated and I'm not a lawyer.

Looking back, I can see that what we needed was technical support to make high quality recordings, and someone with the knowledge and contacts to get our name and music known. It's such a shame that never happened.

Summary Writing

According to the passage, how can a musician get a record deal?

You must use continuous writing (not note form) and use your own words as far as possible.

Your summary must be 200 to 250 words.

TIPS

- Though this question is called Summary, it is not a summary in the sense of being a general description of a situation but instead it is a focused list of the specific ideas or details contained in the passage, after anything irrelevant has been removed.
- Find all the points you can for each part of the question.
- To get a high mark you need to show evidence of clear and concise summary style throughout, precise focus and the use of your own words.
- Do not write in the first person or comment on the content of the passage, or present a narrative or use quotations.
- Though you must use your own words whenever possible, you do not have to find synonyms for technical words, e.g. solar heaters.
- Summaries much longer than the number of words asked are no longer summaries and will be penalized in the writing mark.
- To be concise enough for summary style and to get in all points you should use complex sentences containing two or three points in each.
- Do not repeat points, or express them vaguely.
- There is no need to introduce or conclude a summary, and doing so wastes time and words. Start by using the wording of part of the question, e.g. ¨The features of the desert were…¨

Useful ideas

- Read the piece to be summarized for understanding without editing.
- Look closely at **topic sentences** and **key words repeated throughout**.
- Read through the material and **cross out useless information.**
- Your summary must be in a paragraph of continuous writing, <u>not as a list.</u>
- Restate the **ideas in your own words** as much as possible. **Avoid direct quotations, long descriptions, explanations and examples. Use relative clauses to join sentences.**
- Follow both the **organization of the original** as well as its style.
- **Opinions** should **not appear** in the summary.
- Do only what you are being asked to do.
- Check out that you have made each point only once.
- Similar points count as one!!